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MAJORITY LEADER

5TH DISTRICT, MARYLAND



Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-6502

February 2, 2022

The Hon. Merrick B. Garland
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20530

The Hon. Alejandro N. Mayorkas
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
2707 Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Attorney General Garland and Secretary Mayorkas:

I am writing to express my grave concern regarding the recent, coordinated bomb threats that have targeted Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) across the country.

Students at HBCUs work diligently each day in pursuit of an education of the highest caliber, and they deserve to do so free from fear or threats. Recently, their education has been disrupted by coordinated bomb threats that intimidated and terrorized their campuses and communities. All students – including those at Bowie State University in my district, which is one of our nation's oldest HBCUs – ought to feel safe on their campuses and able to further their education in a secure environment.

Most disturbingly, some of these threats were made on the eve and first day of Black History Month, which further suggests these threats were racially motivated. This is a clear instance of an attempt to engender fear in the Black community during a time of celebration and pride. These threats, and the rise of other racially motivated hate crimes and acts of domestic terrorism across the country, continue to raise serious concerns about hate-based and race-based violence in America and what law enforcement is doing to address it.

This is not the first time that HBCUs have come under attack. Indeed, at times in our history, Black students at HBCUs have been targeted and victimized by those who promote the twisted ideologies of white supremacy and white nationalism. However, we must strive to ensure that threats like the ones this week are not minimized or ignored; indeed, they demand a government-wide, interagency commitment to rooting out this hate and protecting HBCU students, faculty members, and staff. The launch of the Department of Justice's new domestic terrorism unit is a welcome sign to the public that incidents such as these, which are dangerously on the rise, are receiving the specialized attention they merit. Identifying the perpetrators and effectively deterring future threats must continue to be a top priority for the Administration and for federal law enforcement.

I understand the FBI may have identified persons of interest associated with the aforementioned threats. I urge you to conduct a thorough investigation and to hold all involved parties accountable under federal law so that justice is served. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

STENY H. HOYER
House Majority Leader

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